

Rais: House Dr M's papers in special library

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KUALA LUMPUR: The works, thoughts and contributions of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad should be housed in a special library that will become the focal point of much learning and research.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim made the call during the launching of the 10-volume Encyclopaedia of Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Islamic Centre, University of Oxford in Britain.

Dr Rais said presidential papers in other countries were meticulously compiled and deposited into specific libraries even though a president had only done a stint of four to eight years of public service.

"The statesman we are honouring in absentia today has not only done more years of public service than any American president or prime minister, but had done the marathon act of governing his country as punctuated by a plethora of development".

"He did this not by virtue of any shady political deals and manoeuvres but through a system of accepted and entrenched laws of the land that are canopied by the Malaysian Constitution," Dr Rais said in his speech which was released here.

He said that although there were some pitfalls of policy in Dr Mahathir's administration, generally Malaysia had benefited immensely under his leadership.

Rais said developing countries were looking up to Dr Mahathir as their spokesman because of his ability in telling the truth, a rare commodity, which he values very much.

"The Malaysian premier is more than qualified to be referred to as the statesman from Asia and the builder of modern Malaysia. He had lectured from Tokyo to Rio de Janeiro, from Beirut to the Kremlin, has supporters in the Third World and the South-South endeavour has also earned him respect and appreciation," he said.

Dr Rais said that during Dr Mahathir's 22 years as Prime Minister the country's poverty level now was less than 9% compared to 49% four decades ago.